

OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
MEDICAL CHARACTER.

ADDRESSED TO

THE GRADUATES

OF THE

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF NEW-YORK,

AT

*The Commencement, held on the 4th of April, 1826.*

---

BY DAVID HOSACK, M. D.

Vice-President of the College, and Professor of the Theory and Practice of  
Physic and of Clinical Medicine.

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE GRADUATES.

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NEW-YORK:

J. SEYMOUR, PRINTER, JOHN-STREET.

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At a meeting of the Graduates of Medicine, held in the Hall of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the City of New-York, April 4th, 1826, B. F. JOCELIN was called to the Chair, and GEORGE E. PALMER, appointed Secretary.

Having heard with no ordinary feelings of pleasure the Address delivered to us in the Chapel of Columbia College, on the morning of the 4th inst., by Vice-President HOSACK, and being desirous of expressing our approbation of the sentiments it inculcates, and our grateful feelings for the important and useful advice we have received through this medium—

*It was, on motion, unanimously Resolved,* That a Committee be appointed to wait on Professor HOSACK, and communicate our grateful acknowledgments for the interest he has taken in giving us such appropriate moral lessons, and for the ability with which they were imparted; and as a further sense of our approbation, to signify to him the pleasure and advantage we should experience by the publication of the Address.

*Resolved,* That HENRY E. GRIFFITH, W. M. IRELAND, and WILLIAM JAMES BARRY, compose that Committee.

B. F. JOCELIN, Chairman.  
GEORGE E. PALMER, Sec'y.

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New-York, April 4, 1826.

RESPECTED SIR,

We with pleasure communicate to you the sentiments of the Graduates, as implied in the enclosed Resolutions. In addition to which, we would individually express our satisfaction at the kindness and interest you have always manifested in our advancement, and shall ever entertain for you the warmest feelings of gratitude and respect. We sincerely hope that we may read and preserve an Address which will long be connected with the most pleasing associations.

With sentiments of the highest regard

HENRY E. GRIFFITH,  
W. M. IRELAND,  
W. M. JAMES BARRY.

To D. HOSACK, M. D.

NEW-YORK, APRIL 5, 1826.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Discourse, a copy of which you ask for publication, was delivered in compliance with the duty which my official station in the College demanded, and was intended for your use. If therefore the perusal of it be deemed by you likely to prove beneficial, I cannot consider myself at liberty to decline an acquiescence with your kind request. At the same time, judging from the fate of other recent, and I trust disinterested efforts on my part, to promote the good of our profession, and knowing the unqualified abuse the present Essay is likely to receive from the same quarter, I am sensible I only add another occasion of exciting the angry passions of those malevolent spirits, some of whose portraits I have endeavoured to depict; and who, like tigers concealed in their jungles, lie crouching for their prey, and ready to convert all to their own selfish and savage gratification. Yet, with the hope that this Discourse may have the salutary effects you anticipate, and which have ever prompted me in the performance of my duty, I commit it to your care.

Allow me to add my grateful acknowledgments for the partial feelings which the Class has manifested towards me, and the kindness with which you have been pleased to communicate their Resolutions.

I am, Gentlemen, with great regard,

Yours,

DAVID HOSACK.

To HENRY E. GRIFFITH, M. D.      }  
W. M. IRELAND, M. D. and      } Committee.  
Wm. JAMES BARRY, M. D.      }

## ADDRESS.

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GENTLEMEN GRADUATES,

You have now completed the outline of study which the laws of the State and the charter of the College exact from the candidates for admission to the Practice of Medicine, and the honours of the Doctorate.

I am happy to bear my testimony, and in which my colleagues unanimously concur, to the attention and the ardour with which you have prosecuted your studies, during your attendance upon the lectures of this institution.

You have exhibited to the professors and to the trustees of the college, as well as to the regents of the university, satisfactory evidence of the diligent use of your time, and of the proficiency you have attained in the various branches which constitute the qualifications necessary for the accomplished physician and surgeon; and you have received, as the reward of your dili-

gence and acquirements, the highest medical honour the university has in its power to bestow.

In consequence of the resignation of the president, who has recently withdrawn from the connexions he has so long and honourably held in this college, and whose duty it would have been to address you, I beg leave to offer a few friendly and valedictory counsels upon this occasion, which separates you from your Alma Mater, and introduces you to the world as practitioners of the healing art.

You have been made acquainted with the structure and functions of the human frame, and the faculties of the mind, with their mutual operations upon each other in a state of health.

You have attended to the changes they severally undergo by disease—the characteristic symptoms of the various and numerous maladies to which both the body and mind are exposed, and for the removal of which your skill and knowledge will soon be put in requisition.

You have been referred to the numerous works which contain the most authentic history of the diseases for which you will be called upon to prescribe; and your attention has been directed

to the best description of their symptoms, their causes, and the indications of treatment, to which they lead ; and you have been taught, and at the New-York Hospital you have witnessed, the practical application of the various and numerous means to be employed in their prevention and cure.

Here a wide field of philosophical research, embracing Zoology, Botany, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Pharmacy, and various other branches of physical science, either of which alone, cultivated in its fullest extent, is sufficient to engage the incessant and laborious occupation of the mind, has been disclosed to your view.

In thus bringing to your recollection the numerous subjects of inquiry, to which you have already given your attention, as preparatory to the honours with which you are now invested, it will at once remind you, that the impressions made of the truths you have acquired, are recent and transient ; and indeed, that you have yet received but the outline of that knowledge and of those principles, which, to be rendered useful, must be made familiar to the mind, and be deeply impressed upon the understanding.

To make such impressions durable, the inference is manifest, that they must be frequently reiterated, or they become useless and are lost.

Allow me, gentlemen, here to observe, and I do it with all the frankness of parental feeling, that although you have given attention to the branches constituting the customary course of a medical education, and have been pronounced qualified in those general principles which are necessary in prescribing for the diseases that ordinarily fall under the notice of the practitioner, you will all be conscious that there is still a variety of subjects and details, to which your attention has not yet been given, to the extent that you yourselves will deem necessary, when you may be engaged in practice: you will therefore, I am persuaded, not rest satisfied until you shall have filled up all those deficiencies that you necessarily must have observed in the course of your examinations, and the revision of your studies.

But it is not only necessary to make frequent reference to the sources of elementary instruction, and of practical knowledge, which have been pointed out; you are also called upon

by moral obligation, by the duties you owe to your own honour and character, to your profession, and to the sick who may place their confidence in your skill, to add to your present acquirements a knowledge of the improvements medicine is daily receiving in different parts of the world, especially so far as they may be subservient to the numerous and complicated ills committed to your care.

To omit such opportunities of improvement, and thereby to deprive the sick of the benefits that would be derived from such researches, cannot be considered in any other point of view than a criminal neglect of duty. Remember that just admonition, “*Quem non servasti cum potuisses, eum occidisti.*” But the crime is punished. In the event referred to, you are not only deprived of that high gratification that the physician receives from the conscientious discharge of duty, and of having afforded relief to the afflicted; but, if not dead to that sensibility which should ever characterise the professor of the healing art, and without which he is not duly qualified for his profession, you will experience the reproaches of an internal monitor, infinitely

more painful to be borne than any bodily sufferings to which you will ever be called upon to administer.

This is not all;—the friends of the deceased will form an estimate of your skill and fidelity,—I grant not in every instance a just one, but for the most part that judgment will be correct. You are superseded; the more industrious cultivator of the profession is employed: you are degraded, while he is honoured and rewarded. His superior skill and success are proclaimed—his business is extended—wealth, fame, and usefulness are his remuneration.

Industry, united with a sound understanding, gentlemen, are sufficient to insure these favourable results. I pray you, therefore, to omit no opportunity, which your intermissions from practice will afford, of cultivating and of extending that knowledge you have thus far acquired.

In the practice of your profession, you will frequently have occasion to exercise all the resources which your abilities, your acquirements, your observations, or your experience can supply; and frequently such is the urgency of the occasion, that you have no time for deliberation; all de-

pends on the decision of the moment; the peculiar means of relief must be forthwith applied, or the life in your hands must be the inevitable sacrifice.

If we except the art of war, there is certainly no other profession which calls for the same promptness in the exercise of the understanding, and the same activity in carrying into operation the decisions of the judgment, as that of medicine. Ignorance, therefore, of the appropriate means of counteracting the malady before you, or inefficiency in their application, becomes a crime.

Industry, and laborious research, will alone enable you to perform those duties with facility, which the obligations you have just entered into impose.

Medicine is not a mechanical art, but a science, that involves a body of facts and general principles, that can only be acquired and retained in the mind by the constant exercise of its faculties, to be applied as the circumstances of the occasion may demand.

But you have still additional duties to perform. In a discourse delivered at the opening of the last session, you will remember I particularly pointed

out to you how treacherous is the memory in retaining that knowledge we may have acquired; and urged upon you the importance, and indeed the necessity, of recording, in a common-place-book, the most important truths which may present themselves to you in reading, the observations that you may make at the bed-side of the sick, or that you may receive from intercourse with your fellow-practitioners; and upon that occasion I referred you to numerous examples of literary as well as eminent medical characters, by whom that practice has been found beneficial, and tributary to their fame and usefulness. The names of Boyle, Locke, Montaigne, Lord Oxford, Voltaire, Gibbon, Pope, Priestley, and of our distinguished countrymen, Franklin, Colden, Edwards, Rush, and others, you will recollect were cited as examples for your imitation.

In addition to this aid to the memory, let me also advise you to set apart another volume, or note-book, for the purpose of recording the various diseases you may have occasion to meet with in practice, and the most prominent circumstances that may be attendant upon their appearance. Such record should be made by every

physician. To this practice the world is now indebted for the valuable history of the epidemics that are contained in the writings of Sydenham, Huxham, Sims, and of our countrymen, Lining, Chalmers, and Rush.

The singular views and doctrines of Sydenham are gone by, but the history he has left of the epidemics of his day, will endure. So, in like manner, when many of the peculiar opinions of Dr. Rush shall have been consigned to oblivion, his history of the diseases with which the city of Philadelphia was visited during his own time, will perpetuate his name to the latest posterity.

In such volume too, should be noticed the climate, the soil, the face of the country, its valleys, its mountains, its native productions, the qualities of its waters, the quantity of rain, the temperature of the atmosphere, the prevailing winds; and any extraordinary phenomena which can have an influence upon the character of diseases, as meteors, comets, earthquakes, &c., should find a place in such records.

Inasmuch as they have an influence upon the human constitution, and the character of the prevailing diseases, and in some instances give rise

to them, they should be especially remarked. The writings of Dr. Lining and of Dr. Chalmers, in the records they have made of the climate and diseases of South Carolina; of Dr. Rush, in his Observations on the Climate and Diseases of Pennsylvania; of Dr. Chisholm, in his View of the Island of Grenada; and of Dr. Drake, in his Picture of Cincinnati,—are excellent models for your imitation.

For an illustration of the effects of these changes in the atmosphere upon the human constitution, let me refer you to the valuable repository of facts contained in the work of Mr. Webster on Pestilence. Although his peculiar opinions are frequently hypothetical and extravagant—and there is oftentimes no connexion whatever between the diseases he has recorded, and the atmospheric and other phenomena he has associated with them—yet, in many instances the dependence of the one on the other is so remarkable, that the philosophical physician cannot pass them by without regard.

You will also peruse with advantage, an excellent paper by Professor Griscom, which has been approved and adopted by the Literary and Phi-

losophical Society of this city, on the manner of conducting meteorological observations. Permit me also to advise you, as far as your leisure will allow, when recording the passing occurrences that you may meet with in the course of your professional business, to notice at full length any remarkable cases of disease that may present themselves.

The most eminent physicians that have adorned the last century, have pursued this practice, and have given to the world some of the most interesting facts that are to be met with in your medical reading, and which have been the means of establishing those principles which at this day constitute the science of medicine.

Adopt, and diligently pursue, this system of observing and recording the most important facts and cases which may fall under your notice, and you will receive a rich reward for your labour, both as it regards your success in practice, as well as the reputation you will acquire by giving to the world the results of your observations.

You at once then perceive, from the view of the numerous and varied occupations of the physician, how incompatible are those severe and

unceasing exercises of the understanding, with the ordinary pleasures and amusements of life. The mind, therefore, intent upon the conscientious fulfilment of duty, or desirous of attaining to excellence, or ambitious of reputation, will not be diverted by any pursuits, such as greatly interest the attention or engage the passions, that are not tributary to, or connected with, the science of medicine.

In a conversation I held with the late Dr. Rush, in the last year of his life, he expressed his great regret that he had not at an earlier period adopted the resolution by which he was then governed, of giving his exclusive attention to his profession; but had suffered his mind to be diverted by other and less congenial objects.

This observation, coming from one who has done so much as a practitioner and teacher of medicine, and who, by his writings, has contributed so largely to the medical character and literature of our country, cannot fail to impress your minds with the value and extent of the science in which you are engaged, and the necessity of giving your undivided attention to its various departments, and which indeed, considered in

their fullest extent, may be said to embrace a large portion of the sciences which relate to mind or matter.

If, then, such be the extent of our art, and the time allotted to it be so limited, that every hour becomes necessary to enable us to keep pace even with the changes and improvements it daily receives, the inference flows irresistibly, that the physician cannot, consistently with the obligations of duty and regard to his professional character and usefulness, habitually spend his time in the ordinary and frivolous pleasures of life.

I trust I shall not be accused of the want of liberality on this subject; but I must be permitted to remark, as the result of long observation that the habitual indulgence, and loss of time expended, at the gaming table, the race course, the tavern, the political cabal, are altogether incompatible with the occupation, and I will say, the dignity of character appertaining to the accomplished physician. It is in medicine as in religion, we cannot serve two masters: nor can the physician, while in practice, consistently take upon himself the duties of another occupation or profession.

A law once existed, and I believe is still in force, but dictated by a different principle from that to which I now refer, prohibiting the physician from performing the duties of a juryman. In like manner, while he professes himself a practitioner of medicine, it should equally disqualify him as a member of a legislative body, or as the occupant of any other public office calculated to distract his mind from his professional pursuits. If such salutary law existed, our houses of legislation would have fewer quack politicians to embarrass their proceedings, and our profession would be freed from a portion of the empiricism with which it is at present dishonoured.

In the early ages, the priests were the chief repositories of the learning of the day, and while administering in holy things, they also performed the duties of the physician. So also, within a few years it was the custom to unite, and we still occasionally witness the union of, the clerical and medical character in the same individual. This is equally to be reprobated; for either occupation in the present day, and in the present state of science, calls for all the powers of the mind, for all the acquisitions of education, and the un-

ceasing labour of the conscientious teacher of divine truths, or the faithful practitioner of the healing art. Here too, the law of our land should interpose its prohibitions.

Seeing then, gentlemen, that the profession you have selected, as the occupation for life, demands your unceasing attention and talents, let me advise you so to divide your time, that a portion of the day may be regularly set apart for the study of some of the immediate departments of your profession, and the cultivation of the understanding, by as much general reading in the collateral branches of knowledge as your engagements will permit. Without these aids, derived from constant reading and improvement, a physician cannot discharge his duties to himself, his patients, his profession, or the community. Remember, that even the perusal of the periodical journals, containing a summary of the improvements and changes that are constantly going on in the practical branches of medicine, are at present so numerous as to require no inconsiderable portion of your time. If to these you add a general survey of the departments of science which have even an immediate connexion with

your profession,—namely, that of physiology, natural history, chemistry, meteorology,—every hour not occupied with attention to the sick, will be fully employed: hence then, habits of industry, an economical division of your time, the practice of early rising, and temperance, are indispensably necessary for the successful exercise of your profession, and will be no less tributary to your health and enjoyment.

Industry in any laudable pursuit, is a never-failing source of satisfaction; but when the mind is directed to objects of high importance, and its exertions are attended with success, there is no state so happy as that of the industrious man in the constant exercise of his skill and abilities. And when these are directed to the relief of human suffering, I know of no luxury which the heart can enjoy, superior to that which the physician or surgeon experiences from the successful application of his art.

I am well aware of the pains as well as pleasures attendant upon the exercise of our profession. I well know the humility, the dependence, you will occasionally feel when entering the threshold of an arrogant and imperious “lord of

the isle," whose wealth alone gives him the ascendancy he holds in society; for he wants the intelligence to appreciate your knowledge, and the heart to be sensible of the gratitude he should feel for the kindness and attention he receives from your professional services.

But with the dark shades of this picture some brighter spots are to be contrasted, which it is a pleasing task to select. Yes, gentlemen, there are some occasions when you will receive, as the reward of your anxieties and solicitude, the highest gratification the human heart can feel. I ask, what can afford more thrilling delight than to witness the unexpected recovery of a beloved parent, upon whose restoration a numerous family are dependent for their daily subsistence, their education and protection? What heart will not throb in sympathy with that of the parent, to whose bosom the only child is restored from a state of danger that had nearly banished every ray of hope?

I had almost said, I would not exchange the pleasure I have thus experienced in witnessing the happiness of others, for all the pecuniary considerations that can be attached to the profession.

It more than counterbalances all the pains and mortification we experience from the ingratitude of those whom we have served.

I can say with truth, that with my present knowledge of the pains and pleasures belonging to the practice of medicine, could I be placed in the situation to be again called upon to select a profession, that of medicine would have my immediate preference—not only from the inexhaustible sources of interest derived from the study of its numerous branches, but from the gratification derived from the application of its principles to the relief of suffering humanity.

The observation of Cicero must have arisen from those feelings, when he pronounced his eulogy upon the healing art. “*Homines ad Deos, nulla re proprius accedunt, quam salutem Hominibus dando.*”

Temperance in your mode of living, is no less necessary to preserve the mental faculties in a state capable of improvement, than it is for the discharge of your daily professional duties. While “to temperance every day is bright, and every hour is propitious to diligence,” so intemperance, or dissipation of any sort, is destructive of that

state of the faculties, both of the body and mind, which our profession demands; and utterly disqualifies the physician at the bed-side of the sick; for his understanding, like his external senses, is in a state of hebetude, rendering him alike incapable of investigating the character and origin of the disease, or of directing the means that may be appropriate for its relief.

The world commits a great error, and may be said to give its sanction to such vice, when a physician in such disgraceful habits, and in the daily violation of his obligations, is admitted to the chambers of the sick.

In some of the Eastern States, an intemperate man is considered as unfit to take the charge of his own property, and it is wisely committed to the care of others. How much more necessary is it, by an act of the legislature and of medical societies, to degrade, and to remove from practice, the man who, by his intemperance, puts in jeopardy the lives of those who may become the subjects of his hazardous and fatal prescriptions.

This vice not only, as I have remarked, incapacitates the mind from forming correct opinions and views, and at the bed-side produces conse-

quences fatal to the patient unhappily exposed to the prescriptions of the physician's disordered mind; but it leads to results and to conduct ultimately destructive of all moral principle, and renders the wretched victim a prey to every bad passion that can dishonour his nature.

Under the false visions of this destroyer, as in the higher grades of mania, every object is seen through a distorted medium; his best benefactor is considered as his foe; truth is disregarded; the most abominable falsehoods that a frenzied brain can create, are urged with a pertinacity which alone betrays the source from whence they proceed.

Like the malignancy of fever, it pervades and governs the whole man, and displays itself in every act of his life, while he is under the influence of his daily inebriating potion. This is not a fancied picture.

If, in the ordinary intercourse of life, these things occur, what will be the result of the prescriptions of this maniacal guardian of the lives and health of the sick who unwarily fall under his *protecting* care? I cannot, therefore, too earnestly urge upon your observance the virtue of temperance.

This leads me, gentlemen, to make a remark or two upon another species of intemperance; that arising from bad passions, from jealous and malignant feelings, especially towards brethren of the same profession.

Unfortunately in all professions, and indeed in all pursuits, where the mind is actively occupied, there is an excitement and irritability of the nervous system, which, while it leads to an ardent desire of excellence and superiority, also creates a feeling of jealousy and envy towards those who may be competitors for the same distinction and public favour. I exempt no profession from those feelings, which, until counteracted by discipline and a strong sense of moral duty, are to a degree inseparable from our nature. Even those whose sacred office it is to inculcate lessons of virtue and religion, with all the control they are enabled to exercise over their own conduct, too frequently betray this characteristic of human frailty, and which is no less opposed to the peaceful spirit of the gospel they profess.

The profession of medicine is not exempt from this charge, but in common with many others, participates largely in the indulgence of those

bad passions, by which its members are not only at variance with each other, but which leads to consequences equally destructive to their common interest, to professional character, and the public good.

Accordingly there are some persons, who are constitutionally of that unhappy temperament, that benevolent or generous feelings can never find a place in their bosoms, or display themselves in their conduct. Persons of this description, happily so rarely to be met with, that they constitute exceptions to the general character of man, are soon appreciated by the community; and notwithstanding the abilities occasionally connected with this misanthropic disposition, they are deservedly neglected, and are doomed to pass their lives in merited obscurity.

There are others again, who, upon first entering into professional business, and for which perhaps neither their talents, their acquirements, or their manners, give them any peculiar claims to the confidence of their friends or of their fellow-citizens, if not immediately employed in their professional capacity, become peevish and impatient, consider themselves overlooked, and at

once display their disappointment in an envious and hostile temper towards the world, and especially to those who may be more successful in obtaining public confidence than themselves. Under these circumstances of mortification and chagrin, they are soon led to commence open hostilities, making use of every occasion, public and private, that may offer, of traducing their more fortunate and meritorious colleagues.

I know not, gentlemen, any more despicable characters than those *professional gossips*, who thus go about seeking whom they can make the subjects of their “trumpet-tongued” abuse ; whose only abilities, in whatever station intrigue or accident may place them, are those of doing mischief ; who are ever and anon detracting from the well-earned fame and usefulness of their fellow-practitioners, and unceasing in their ineffectual and vain endeavours to degrade them to their own individual level.

Do not therefore be impatient when you embark in your professional career, because your services are not immediately called for, or you may fail to attain that honourable distinction that is now in prospect before you.

Remember, that confidence is only to be imparted to your friends by time, and by the evidence that you are not wasting your opportunities of improvement, and impairing your faculties by unworthy pursuits and degrading pleasures ; but that you are assiduously occupied in improving those acquisitions with which you entered the profession, and studiously profiting by the experience which your yet small share of business affords, and thereby qualifying yourselves for a more extensive and successful scene of practice.

There is another error of conduct, partly arising from the same train of feelings, to which I beg leave for a moment to advert, that the young practitioner is apt to fall into, and against which it is his duty to guard himself. It is that of self-sufficiency, and an overweening confidence in his own opinions and practice, by which he is led to disregard and undervalue the observations and experience of others.

Under the influence of this false pride of opinion, forgetful of the adage, that “experience in the ignorant is perseverance in error,” he often-times persists in his attendance until the patient’s situation becomes hopeless ; and then jealous lest

the credit of recovery be ascribed to the person who may be called in, he is induced either altogether to avoid, or reluctantly consents to, a consultation; which at this late period of the disease becomes of little importance but to divide the responsibility of the awful consequences, or to shield him from that censure which his obstinacy or his ignorance has so justly merited. To this self-conceit the lives of thousands have been sacrificed.

In some instances too, the physician, with great injustice, and in violation of the obligations he enters into when admitted to the profession, permits his private misunderstandings with his fellow practitioners to interfere with his duties to the sick, refusing to hold intercourse with a physician with whom he may be at variance, but whose abilities and experience, he as well as the world cannot but acknowledge. No circumstances can justify this departure from duty. The physician is a public character; he holds an official station in the community; and therefore, while professing himself a practitioner, cannot be absolved by any private considerations from the discharge of the functions appertaining to that profession.

But I must not pass over the no less culpable conduct of those, who having been long engaged in the practice of medicine, conceive themselves competent to meet and prescribe for every event that may present itself in the progress of a disease; and believing that their own knowledge and views supersede those of all others, avoid all consultations unless previously urged upon them by the friends and connexions of the sick.

Allow me therefore to guard you against those errors of conduct, arising from either of the sources enumerated, as utterly at variance with your own interest, and with that integrity of character and justice to the sick that are looked for at your hands.

The obligations you have this day entered into, I trust, will induce you ever to obtain for your patients the best advice that can be procured, utterly regardless of any other feelings than the welfare of those who may be committed to your care.

But I must still detain you a few moments, while I call your attention to the more immediate duties of the physician towards his patient, and the conduct proper to be observed in the chamber of the sick.

In the first place let me recommend to you punctuality in obeying the summons of your patient; for in many instances, in consequence of the delay of the physician, a disease acquires violence and activity, that render it afterwards difficult to be controlled; and in some situations, before the physician arrives, even life itself may be expended, which the timely application of art might have preserved. And when your attendance may be rendered in consultation, the same punctuality in keeping your appointment is not only necessary as it regards the sick, but is due to the physician with whom you are to confer. Much I know depends upon the habitual division of your time, and order in the disposal of your engagements. In proof of the correctness of this observation, and as an illustration of the benefits to be derived from a regular disposal of the time appropriated to your sleep, your study, and your hours of correspondence, it may be remarked, and I believe it to be universally true, that he who is most extensively occupied, performs his duties with most facility, and is the most punctual in all his engagements; for the reason, that he knows the value of time,

and of the regular allotment of it to the various purposes for which it is required.

Secondly. In attendance upon the sick, the physician should avoid all hurry, and deliberately examine the condition of his patient. It is true that experience, and the habit of observation, give great facility in discerning the nature and peculiar character of a disease; but oftentimes, owing to some remarkable change in the state of the atmosphere, or to some peculiarity in the constitution of the patient, his mode of living, or some other circumstances, the disease exhibits a compound character, and a degree of obscurity, that will readily mislead the physician who is precipitate in his inquiries, or in forming his conclusions from the hasty examination of a few of the more prominent appearances which the disorder may exhibit. The causes which have induced it must be no less carefully ascertained, to enable you to arrive at those indications of treatment, which alone can lead to a safe and successful practice: for as Celsus justly remarks, “quomodo morbos curare conveniat, qui unde his sint ignoret.”

Thirdly. Let me recommend to you gentleness of manner, in your intercourse with the sick.

Some practitioners, owing to the want of a suitable preparatory education, and of early intercourse with polished society, acquire a rudeness of deportment, and in some instances a brutality of manner, utterly inconsistent with the urbanity of the gentleman, and of that courtesy and kindness which should always characterise the physician.

In your attendance upon females in particular, peculiar delicacy is called for, and will never be violated by the physician who possesses that sensibility, which should ever be inseparable from the medical character: in like manner, when you may have occasion to prescribe for persons whose ailments proceed from a morbid condition of the nervous system, whether constitutional or acquired, real or imaginary, it will be no less your duty to enter into the feelings of your patients, and by a soothing and kind manner, to direct the remedies that may be indicated for their relief.

In your attendance on the sick, therefore, you will recollect, that their feelings and emotions, whether mental or bodily, require to be known and attended to, no less than the symptoms of the disease. Even their prejudices are not to be treated with levity or opposed by rashness.

Study therefore to unite suavity with decision, and kindness with authority: you will then inspire the minds of your patients with affection, confidence, respect, and gratitude.

Fourthly. It is also your duty to give that attendance upon the sick which the nature of the disease may render necessary, or the solicitude of the patient or friends may require.

And here, gentlemen, let me remark, that in the chamber of the sick, no event that can have an influence upon the character of a disease should be disregarded by the physician, whether it relates to the administration of the medicines prescribed, the regulations of the diet, or to those circumstances which more immediately constitute the regimen of the patient. The physician should be all eye, all ear. Indeed, the vigilant physician will not permit the minutest circumstance relating to the disease to escape his observation; nor should he feel himself degraded by any service in the sick-room necessary to be done that will alleviate the sufferings of the patient. Recollect the sensible reply of the celebrated Raphael, when asked by what means he had attained to such perfection in his art. His

answer was, "I think nothing that belongs to it beneath my attention." This reply should be recollected by all who wish to excel in the practice of medicine: every subject which it presents, every occurrence at the bed-side, has a claim upon your attention.

In some acute diseases, which are violent in their character, rapid in their course, or attended with great and immediate danger, your attendance must be as unceasing as the occasion may be urgent. In these, your presence is required until the patient may be relieved, or the dangerous symptoms are abated. On the other hand, it will be no less your duty to diminish your attendance, as the disease may change its character, and your services become less necessary.

When you may be in attendance as a consulting physician, be also careful not to make unnecessary visits, and thereby to multiply the expenses of the sick to an inordinate extent.

This leads me to observe, with regard to the compensation you are to receive, that you should be altogether governed by the pecuniary circumstances and condition of your patients. When they are affluent, you will be entitled to the full

amount of the fees that are annexed by the Medical Society to the peculiar services rendered. Under such circumstances, to take less than that amount of compensation, is to undervalue your profession, to do injustice to yourselves and to your fellow-practitioners; and indeed is no less dishonourable than it is fraudulent, to exceed the established rates, by any arbitrary estimate you may form of the value of your services, of the attendance given, or of the skill that may have been exercised; for doubtless the Medical Society will have attached an adequate remuneration for the skill or attendance of the physician or surgeon. On the other hand, if the patient be poor, perhaps reduced in his situation from a state of prosperity and wealth, with a large family depending for their support upon a precarious subsistence,—your humanity, your sense of justice, and I will say, your regard for your own interest, should induce you to proportion your demand to the exigencies of the individual, or of the family for whom you prescribe. I blush for my profession, gentlemen, when I witness the exactions, the rapacity manifested towards a worthy family who are unable to make the compen-

sation demanded, and which they themselves in prosperity would cheerfully wish to render. Let, then, the pecuniary demands upon your patients be regulated by their condition in life.

From those who are in moderate circumstances, be content to receive a nominal retribution: preserve to them, where you can, that desire of honourable independence which is inherent in our nature: do not add to their bodily ills the anguish of a wounded spirit, or suffer the heart to become depressed, and thereby to paralyse every hope and effort to recover their wonted prosperity. But I forbear: the generous feelings of those whom I now address, and the liberal education they have received, render further remarks on this topic altogether superfluous.

Proceed then, gentlemen, as you have begun; you cannot fail to reap a rich harvest as your reward, in profit, usefulness, and reputation.

Go forth, like the good Samaritan, and pour oil and wine into the wounds of those whom you may meet at the way-side; and, like the founder of our holy religion, who considered it a part of his high character and mission to give sight to the blind, to restore the palsied limb, to heal all manner of

diseases,—proceed, under the guidance of his great example, in the conscientious performance of the duties of the commission you have this day received: and when your head may repose upon its last pillow, may you enjoy those consolations which arise from the recollection of a life spent in the performance of duty, and devoted to the benefit of your fellow-men.

That you may receive this return, is my earnest prayer. Prosperity and happiness attend you all. Farewell.

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